



Nursery and
Landscape Association

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



The VNLA's mission is to support and strengthen the horticulture industry of Vermont by creating greater awareness of the benefits of landscaping and promoting the professional services and products of our members to the buying public.



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VNLA PAST PRESIDENTS

- 1964 - Fred Abbey
- 1965 - Lewis Hill
- 1966 - T. Harold Johnson
- 1967-68 - Richard Stevens
- 1969-70 - Thomas Haddock
- 1971 - Stanwood Wollaston
- 1972-73 - Elmer Brown
- 1974-75 - Emerson Holcomb
- 1976 - William Horsford
- 1977 - Klaus Weber
- 1978 - Ned Davis
- 1979-80 - Dennis Bruckel
- 1981-82 - Chris von Trapp
- 1983 - Ralph Knox Sr.
- 1984-87 - Joan Hulbert
- 1988-91 - Earl Welch
- 1992-93 - Jane von Trapp
- 1994-95 - Charlie Proutt
- 1996-97 - Thamasin Sullivan
- 1998-99 - Chris Conant
- 2000-01 - Connie Gardner
- 2002-03 - Charles Siegchrist
- 2004-06 - Layne Tharp
- 2007-09 - Tim Parsons
- 2010-12 - Rebecca Lindenmeyr
- 2012-2016 - VJ Comai
- 2016-2020 - Ed Burke
- 2019- 2023- Ashley Robinson
- 2023 - Present- Gabe Bushey

2025 VERMONT FLOWER SHOW

SAVE THE DATES!
MARCH 7 - 9, 2025

WHERE YOU CAN FIND US!

 @VNLAVT & @VERMONTFLOWERSHOW
 @VNLAVT & @VTFLOWERSHOW
 WWW.VNLAVT.ORG
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 802-425-5117
 HELLO@VNLAVT.ORG

VNLA BOARD MEETING DATES

MARCH 14, 2024
 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
 VIA ZOOM

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024
 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
 VIA ZOOM

JUNE 27, 2024
 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
 VIA ZOOM

NOVEMBER 14, 2024
 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
 VIA ZOOM

BOARD MEETING TIMES/PLACES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE; PLEASE CONTACT THE VNLA OFFICE TO CONFIRM.

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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GABE BUSHEY
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COMMITTEE REPORTS- 2023

EVALUATION AND PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Evaluation and Planning Committee, charged with the responsibility of assessing the Executive Director's role, recommending adjustments to the job description, and reviewing the Association's bylaws for potential modifications, diligently fulfilled its duties this year. The updated bylaws are accessible for review on the VNLA website, reflecting our commitment to transparency and accountability.

Undoubtedly, one of the most challenging tasks faced by the committee was finding a suitable replacement for Kristina as Executive Director. Commencing the year with meticulous planning and inclusive collaboration, the committee implemented a comprehensive strategy, complete with a well-defined timeline, job position advertisements, and thorough interviews with all applicants.

Navigating through a process unfamiliar to us, having not sought a new Executive Director in two decades, brought inherent uncertainties. Despite encountering several qualified candidates, the first interview proved to be the most promising. We are delighted to welcome Jas as our new Executive Director, officially assuming her role on January 1. Jas brings fresh skills and innovative ideas to our team, infusing renewed energy into our mission.

While bidding farewell to Kristina, whose unwavering dedication and efforts have shaped the Association, we express heartfelt gratitude for her years of service. Her absence will be felt deeply, but as we embark on this new chapter with Jas, we are confident that the future is exceptionally promising. I extend my sincere thanks to Kristina and invite all members to join me in welcoming Jas and anticipating the continued success of our Association, propelled by her leadership and the collective strength of our exceptional members.

Gabe Bushey, Committee Chair

FLOWER SHOW COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2023 Vermont Flower Show was held on March 3-5 at the Champlain Valley Expo. Our theme, **Out of Hibernation! Spring Comes to the 100-Acre Wood** brought to life the magical world of Winnie-the-Pooh in the 15,000 sq. ft. Grand Garden Display. Many were wondering how attendance would be after a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic. I am happy to report we broke a record with approximately 13,000 in attendance – a 13% increase over 2019! This also included a Saturday snowstorm which did not seem to deter Flower Show enthusiasts. Visitors came from VT, all over New England and Canada.

One thing is undeniable – there is no other flower show like ours. We are grateful and fortunate to have a large group of volunteers, many of which are VNLA members, who come together, collaborate on every aspect of the show, and create the public showcase we call the Vermont Flower Show. This group effort truly speaks to what Vermont is all about and why we are all a part of the VNLA!

I would like to share some attendee comments from the show's survey:

“Magical”

“We loved the actual flower display, beautiful, creative, fun, and interesting for children. Thought the vendor set up was great also. “

“I learned lots of new things, met a lot of nice and knowledgeable people and am excited to get 3/6/2023 2:30 PM into the garden now.”

“The seminars and workshops were delightful this year.”

“Meeting family and enjoying spring together. “

“Grand Display and the accompanying smell of hyacinths and mulch.”

“Creativity of the Winnie The Pooh show .”

“Such a good theme that kids wore costumes. One of the best displays & really good talks with new info & ideas. Seeing so many people I know and haven't seen in a long time. The smell of flowers. “

“The seminars and the garden display. And just smelling the dirt and the flowers.”

“I love this. Just what I needed on a snowy Saturday.”

“Seminars were excellent! I attended all day for 3 days. And thanks for not scheduling similar things opposite each other -- very important! “

In addition to breaking attendance records, we also broke another record: financial transactions. This year's show netted **\$76,267** which amounted to an **85% increase** when compared to 2019. We attributed this unexpected net in part to record attendance, raising the ticket prices, and selling Flower Show merchandise. These proceeds go back into the VNLA coffers and continue to make the educational events, programs, research grants and student merit awards not only possible but increasingly better. These proceeds also help build up the VNLA reserves, help fund the next flower show, and for the first time in a while the VNLA has set aside funds in two interest earning CDs.



\$76,267

netted from the show

85%

increase when compared to 2019

MARCH 7-9, 2025

next Flower Show



FLOWER SHOW COMMITTEE REPORT

Here are some of the highlights from the 2023 Vermont Flower Show:

- The Grand Garden Display which recreated A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh's 100-Acre Wood featured a handcrafted larger-than-life sized stone book, Christopher Robin's House, Big Stones and Rox, the Bee Tree, Rabbit's House, Kanga's House, Six Pines Trees and Where the Woozle Wasn't, Pooh Bear's House, Piglet's House, Owl's House, Pooh's trap for the Heffalumps, Eeyore's Gloomy Place, and a Nice Place for Piknicks – all with their own unique interpretations. The display was truly a labor of love and work of art.
- Local artists painted live in the garden each day.
- 108 vendors offered their products/services.
- 38 seminars and workshops were offered over 3 days, many of which were presented by VNLA members.
- The Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont held a "Small Standard Flower Show".
- A Family Room which was packed all weekend with entertainment and hands-on activities.
- New this year was a Friday night Gala event held in collaboration with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity whom we have completed several volunteer landscape projects with. We shared net proceeds in the amount of \$1,482 each.
- Great and varied food options were available from 7 food vendors.
- We handed out free wildflower seed packets to each attendee; held two raffles and had Flower Show tote bags for sale. We shared \$3,000 of the tote bag revenue with The Ronald McDonald House in Burlington.
- We held a plant sale at the close of the show with proceeds also breaking a record.

The formula in creating a successful show starts with the many wonderful people participating in bringing and building the show into a reality. The two Flower Show Committees spend hundreds of hours organizing and planning our signature event. VNLA members, UVM master gardeners, students, and community members – literally hundreds of volunteers offer their time to build and staff the show and, of course, we cannot forget the amazing clean-up crew who swoops in when it is all over and has the place broom clean by noon the next day. This year's students hailed from the Center for Technology at Essex, UVM Hort Club, Vermont Technical College, Northland Job Corp and the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center. Association members and supporters also donate most of the plant material, hardscaping materials, provide labor, trucks, tools, gasoline, and expertise. This amount of support is paramount to the success of the show.

I do not exaggerate when I say that there would be no flower show without the members of the two committees who are so remarkable in their generosity of time, expertise, and labor. It is a beautiful collaboration. Please join me in recognizing these amazing people.

FLOWER SHOW COMMITTEE REPORT

The Grand Garden Display Committee: - Melita J. Bass, Committee Co-Chair, Ed Burke - Rocky Dale Gardens, Design Coordinator and Co-Chair, Gabe Bushey - Crafted Landscapes, LLC, Co-Chair, Ashley Robinson, Co-Chair, Aaron Smith - S & D Landscapes, Dan Snow - Dan Snow Stoneworks, David Flaschenriem, Architect, Guinnevere Hand-Boniakowski - Perseid Gardens, Hannah Decker - Fairfax Perennial Farm, Jamie Masefield - Masefield Dry Stone Masonry, Jared Flynn - Jared Flynn Stonework, John Padua - Cobble Creek Nursery, Keith Porter - Cedar Goods, Lezlee Sprenger - Narrow Path, LLC, Liam Murphy - Murphy Landscape Design & Siteworks, Linzy Vos - Rocky Dale Gardens, Marijke Niles - Perennial Gardens Plus Michelle Brunell - UVM Greenhouse Facilities, Nate Carr - Church Hill Landscapes, Inc., Sam Chicaderis - SJC Garden Services, Sarah Holland - River's Bend Design, LLC, Tanya Retz - Mama's Gardens, and VJ Comai, - Burlington City Arborist.

The Vermont Flower Show Committee: Kristina MacKulin, Flower Show Committee Chair, Leslie Pelch and Emma Allen - Delaney Event Management (vendor and site coordinator), Cheryl Dorschner - Vermont Gardener (seminar coordinator), Kathy Perkins - Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont, Marijke Niles- Perennial Gardens Plus (plant sale coordinator), Melita Bass, Shari Johnson - UVM Master Gardener (volunteer coordinator), and Terry Skorstad - Waterfront Events (family room coordinator).

The Bringing Plants to Bloom Committee: Brett Wilbur - Claussen's Florist, Greenhouse, & Perennial Farm, Center for Technology Essex students, Chris Conant & Staff, Claussen's Florist, Greenhouse, & Perennial Farm, Hannah Decker - Fairfax Perennial Farm, John Padua - Cobble Creek Nursery, Lezlee Sprenger - Narrow Path, LLC, Dr. Mark Starrett & UVM Horticulture Club students, Mark Storch - Claussen's Florist, Greenhouse, & Perennial Farm, Michelle Brunell, UVM Greenhouse Facilities, and Nate Carr - Church Hill Landscapes, Inc.

We are ever thankful to our monetary sponsors which help keep our show in the black and truly contribute to the success of the show. **WE THANK THEM SO VERY MUCH!** These sponsors included the **Presenting Sponsors:** Gardener's Supply Company, Market 32/Price Chopper and The Essex Resort; the **Media Sponsors:** Seven Days Newspaper and WCAX, Channel 3; the **Grand Garden Display Sponsor:** American National; the **Tote Bag and Seed Packet Sponsors:** American National, Bartlett Tree Experts, Gardener's Supply Co., Horsford Gardens & Nursery, and Proven Winners; the **Family Room Sponsor:** Green Mountain Mulch; the **Out of Hibernation Sponsor:** MVP Health Care; the **Seminar Sponsors:** VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, Marijke's Perennial Gardens Plus, and McElwain Equipment Rental; the **Tulip Sponsor:** L.D. Oliver Seed Company; the **Daffodil Sponsor:** Branch Out Burlington!; the **Sound Sponsor:** Persied Gardens; and the **Equipment Sponsors:** Milton CAT and J. Labrecque Land Management.

FLOWER SHOW COMMITTEE REPORT

We are also extremely appreciative to the over 80+ in-kind sponsors that donated time, labor, equipment, plants and materials. We could not continue to produce the Flower Show without all this **OVERWHELMING SUPPORT** through the donations we receive. Please take a moment to view the very long list on our website ([HERE](#)).

We often get asked why we do this. I like to think it is a combination of part tradition and part crazy! The VNLA was founded in 1964 and that is when the flower show was conceived. One of the first shows was held in October 1967 in Burlington followed by a show in November of 1968 in Middlebury. These flower shows have certainly evolved over the years, and they all have one thing in common - they inspire the future stewards of the land with one flower show at a time. Each show we produce promotes every VNLA member, our Association as a collective group, and the green industry in Vermont and beyond and it truly speaks to what a dedicated group of professionals can create and implement together.

The VNLA mission continues to be about enhancing and supporting the horticulture industry of Vermont as well as promoting a greater awareness to the public of our green industry professionals and what they have to offer. The Vermont Flower Show is a spectacular way to share that message with the 13,000 people that attended this year's show and they, in turn, spread the word even further.

The planning for the 2025 show began in December. I invite you get involved and participate! New committee members and new ideas are always welcome. The first group session was all about brainstorming the next theme, which will be announced in early 2024. **Mark your calendars for March 7-9, 2025!**

In conclusion, I am overjoyed to report the 2023 Vermont Flower Show was our most successful show yet and I cannot wait to see what this next group of amazingly committed people will bring forth. One thing is for certain it will be nothing short of spectacular! It has been an honor and a joy!

Kristina MacKulin, Committee Chair

INDUSTRY AWARDS PROGRAM REPORT

Since its inception in 2008, the Industry Awards Program has evolved into a cornerstone of our Association's commitment to excellence. It has expanded to encompass a diverse array of projects from both the public and private sectors, serving as a platform for members to continually learn, challenge themselves, and proudly showcase their exceptional work.

The impressive array of submissions, the dedication of our award winners, and the meticulous efforts of our esteemed judges, who generously dedicate their day to review, evaluate, and recognize outstanding projects, collectively contribute to the success of this program. To all those involved, we express our sincere gratitude for your unwavering commitment, showcasing not only your talents but also fortifying the mission of VNLA to strengthen the horticulture industry in Vermont.

Beyond being a platform for internal recognition, this program provides an exceptional opportunity to extend the reach of your work. In the spring, the accomplishments of award winners, both past and present, receive well-deserved recognition through a full-color insert in *Seven Days Newspaper* and at The Vermont Flower Show in March 2025. It's a chance to broaden your horizons and market your accomplishments beyond our membership.

As we move forward, we invite you to join us in this growth journey. We value your input and encourage you to share any suggestions and connections that can further enhance the program's exposure. Your active participation is crucial to its continued growth and success.

Entering the program is not just an opportunity; it's a key driver for its ongoing success. Whether your project is large or small, if it demonstrates a commitment to our industry and a dedication to professionalism, we want to showcase it. Your hard work throughout the season deserves recognition, and now is the time to spotlight your achievements.

We are consistently evaluating and refining the process to ensure it aligns with the evolving needs of our members. Your feedback is invaluable, and we welcome any insights that can contribute to the ongoing improvement of the program. We firmly believe that the Industry Awards Program holds immense value for our members and the industry as a whole, but its impact is magnified through your active participation.

In closing, we urge each and every one of you to consider entering and lend your voice to this celebration of excellence. Your contributions not only enrich the program but also elevate the collective success of our vibrant community. Thank you for being an integral part of the Industry Awards Program's legacy.

Ashley Robinson, Committee Chair

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

In April, the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA) had the honor of addressing the Vermont Senate Agriculture Committee, marking a pivotal moment for the organization's visibility and influence. This opportunity materialized on the heels of the highly successful 2023 Flower event, where VNLA showcased the diverse and significant contributions of its members.

Our delegation, consisting of Andrea Morgante, Sarah Salatino, and myself, presented in Montpelier, emphasizing the extensive impact VNLA members have on Vermont. From fostering growth and executing installations to championing environmental protection, our industry plays a vital role in generating hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs.

Looking ahead, the VNLA is poised for further collaboration with the Vermont Agriculture Producer Association. This strategic partnership allows us to engage with committee members on current and past legislation that may affect our industry, ensuring we remain well-informed advocates for our members.

For any questions or concerns, we encourage you to reach out to us directly or Jas Darland at Toll Free: 888-518-6484 or P: 802-425-5117

Ralph Fitz-Gerald, Committee Chair

MARKETING & EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2023, our marketing endeavors aimed at promoting the VNLA, Vermont Certified Horticulturists, and The Vermont Flower Show witnessed considerable success through various channels:

- **Vermont Public:** Our engagement with Vermont Public continued, featuring on-air VP Livestream throughout May, radio spots in Spring and Fall, and a televised spot on Vermont Public Television for five weeks. These efforts showcased our commitment to the horticulture industry.
- **Seven Days Newspaper Insert:** Our annual insert took a different approach in 2023, emphasizing the Vermont Blooms Passport Program, the Vermont Flower Show, collaborative volunteer planting projects with Habitat for Humanity, the VT Blooms Initiative, VNLA's planting program for civic landscapes, yearly award winners, and the Dr. Leonard Perry Scholarship Fund. Available both in print and online, this publication celebrated the diverse facets of our association.
- **Vermont Blooms Passport Program:** Thanks to Kristina and Ed Burke's efforts, the program expanded in 2023 with the aid of a \$19,000 USDA Specialty Block Producer Grant. Utilizing the EventZee app, we engaged 23 VNLA and VVBGA members, encouraging 114 participants to explore nurseries and greenhouses, creating a dynamic experience with 15 winners.
- **The Dirt Publication:** Our quarterly publication, *The Dirt*, continued to inform members about VNLA activities, industry trends, events, news, and educational opportunities. As we explore options for 2024, your feedback and contributions are welcomed.

MARKETING & EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Social Media Presence:** Our social media efforts on Facebook and Instagram (@vnla.vt / #vnla.vt) remained vibrant, promoting events and featuring the Friday Member Feature of the Week.
- **Vermont Flower Show:** The much-anticipated Vermont Flower Show in March 2023 marked a triumphant return after four years. It surpassed all expectations, setting records in attendance, revenue, and industry participation. This success underscores the public's keen interest in green industry products and services.

Looking Ahead:

- **Strategic Investment:** We are exploring innovative ways to invest our funds in promoting our membership and organization.
- **Next Flower Show:** Planning has commenced for the next Flower Show, with a focus on targeted internet search/ads and expanded social media efforts.
- ***The Dirt* Publication:** Consideration is underway for a yearly printed issue beyond our membership.

We invite active involvement and input from our members as we continue to evolve and enhance our marketing strategies. Together, we will further strengthen our presence in the horticulture industry.

Gabe Bushey, Committee Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2023 membership committee season encompassed several key events:

- Kicking off the year, we addressed a backlog of delayed renewals, prompting a proactive phone calling reminder campaign. Valuable feedback from this initiative highlighted a common theme: members often forgot about renewal activities. Consequently, this sparked a robust discussion on the merits of implementing auto-renewal for a simpler and more streamlined process. However, due to the ongoing executive director transition, action on this matter was deferred until the 2024 season. This forthcoming activity will involve interpreting and potentially amending bylaws, necessitating voting action from the membership.
- In 2023 we had 165 members, welcomed 14 new participants, but also noted the departure of 15 members from 2022. Additionally, we bid farewell to two esteemed lifetime members, Norman and Dorothy Pellett, who passed away during the year.
- As part of our outreach efforts, a targeted mailing was dispatched at the close of 2023 and the beginning of 2024. These postcards were sent to 155 businesses, practitioners, and colleagues, constituting a recruitment campaign for the upcoming year.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

- Notably, the list of members requiring renewal reminders decreased from 2023 to 2024, though it still remains sizable as a percentage of our overall membership.

These initiatives showcase the ongoing dedication of the membership committee to enhance the membership experience and ensure the sustained growth and vitality of our association.

Aaron Smith, Committee Chair

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Over the past year, the Program Committee has curated a variety of engaging events, creating memorable moments for our members.

We kicked off in February with the delightful "Good Food and Music at the Essex Experience." Jamie Masfield and Doug Perkin set the stage with their musical talents. Our Annual Winter Meeting delved into "Knockout Natives" with Sam Hoadley, explored saving biodiversity in Vermont, and learned about bioengineering and native plants for restoring shorelands. The pinnacle of our winter endeavors was the highly successful Flower Show which was held in early March, where everyone joined forces for a fantastic event.

In late June, we gathered at Red Wagon Plants and were warmly welcomed by Julie Rubaud. A walking tour immersed us in the secrets of plant cultivation at Red Wagon, and Julie shared her future plans. Our July twilight, originally planned for Vergennes Falls Pollinator Park, had to be postponed due to heavy rain. Instead, we visited Marijke's Perennials Garden Plus, where a tour through the windows of Marijke's home provided a unique perspective due to an unexpected thunderstorm. We're eager to return next summer for an outdoor tour of Marijke's gardens.

The Summer Meeting and Trade Show was held at Kingsland Bay and marked another highlight of the season. Tom Rogers, of The Nature Conservancy, delivered an inspiring keynote, and Annie White shared case studies in ecological landscape design on Vermont Lakeshore. Elise Schadler, VT Urban & Community Forestry Program Manager, discussed the growth of "Urban & Community Forestry" in Vermont related to federal grant dollars they were recently awarded. The day concluded with the summer auction, where all of the proceeds were donated to NOFA-VT's Farmers Relief Fund (\$2,142.00). A special thanks to the vendors who supported our show.

In September, we ventured to Cady's Falls Botanical Garden, where Don and Lela Avery showcased their nursery and treated us to a captivating tour of their incredible gardens. The following week, we visited Middlebury College to tour a "Rewilding Project" they have undertaken. The tour was led by staff horticulturist Tim Parsons and Aaron Smith of S&D Landscapes.

Our final twilight of the year was "Beers & Tears" at The Burlington Beer Company. Thankfully, there were no tears – just an evening of great conversation and shared stories, reflecting on the highlights of the past year.

THE PLASTIC POT RECYCLING PROGRAM

The Plastic Pot Recycling Program, in partnership with Prides Corner Farms, experienced tremendous growth and success during the 2023 season. Thanks to the dedication of our collection site hosts and the strong responses from all participants, we have significantly increased the amount of nursery waste being diverted from the landfill. Notably, the introduction of wire mesh bins for plastic pot collection in the season ahead will further streamline the process, addressing previous challenges with pallets. This initiative is part of VNLA's unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship within the landscaping industry. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all involved for their invaluable contributions.

As we look forward to another year of exciting events, we express our gratitude to all who participated and made each gathering a success. Cheers to more memorable moments ahead!

Ralph Fitz-Gerald, Committee Chairs

RESEARCH AND AWARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

The following awards were presented at the 2023 VNLA Annual Winter Meeting and Trade Show at the UVM Dudley Davis Center on February 16, 2023. You can read all nominating paragraphs/testimonials [HERE](#).

- **Horticultural Achievement Award** to Leslie and Peter Van Berkum, Van Berkum Nursery, Deerfield, NH.
- **Environmental Awareness Award** to Red Wagon Plants, Hinesburg, VT.
- **Retailer of the Year Award** to Full Circle Gardens, Essex, VT.
- **Young Nursery Professional of the Year Award** to Aaron Smith, S & D Landscapes, LLC, Essex Junction, VT.
- **Allen B. Crane Horticultural Employee Acknowledgement Award** to Rane Russell, Fairfax Perennial Farm, Fairfax, VT.
- **The UVM student merit award** of \$500 was given to Abigail Chastaine, Richmond, VT.
- **The VTC student merit award** of \$500 was given to Brandon Schnopps, North Adams, MA.

In 2023 the VNLA awarded a **\$2,000.00 research grant** to Margaret Skinner, Bruce Parker and Cheryl Sullivan, UVM Entomology Research Laboratory for research on “Increasing Awareness about Habitats that Attract Landscape Friends & Foes”.

Kristina MacKulin, Committee Chair

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

The primary responsibility of this committee is to meticulously identify goals and strategies that will shape the trajectory of our Association. In 2019, recognizing the need for a focused approach, a dedicated committee was established. In January 2020, this committee convened a core group of 20 individuals, representing diverse sectors within our industry. Ranging in experience and involvement with the VNLA, their collective aim was to pinpoint key challenges and develop a comprehensive document outlining strategies to effectively address them.

Strategic planning is pivotal for us, involving the creation of a timeline that delineates our goals and the strategies to achieve them. Central to our vision for the future is the growth of our membership and the cultivation of strong leadership. We emphasize that every member plays a crucial role in this journey, and we invite and value participation at any level. As an organization that spans a wide spectrum of businesses within the industry, our commitment is to support, invite, and involve each member, recognizing that our collective strength grows as we advance together

The success and future of this Association hinge on the active involvement of our members. Your engagement is pivotal in shaping our path forward, and we extend our sincere thanks for the continued support, shared communications, and valuable resources.

Looking ahead with new executive leadership, our commitment to multidimensional thinking remains steadfast. We are actively strategizing for the next few years and beyond, and we are inspired by the dedication of each and every one of you. Your collective efforts are instrumental in propelling our association forward with renewed strength and vitality.

In conclusion, we invite you to join us on this exciting journey. Together, we can shape a future for the VNLA that is vibrant, resilient, and stronger than ever before. Thank you for being an essential part of our association's success story.

Gabe Bushey & Ashley Robinson, Co-Committee Chairs

VCH COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2023 we had 50 certified participants in the VCH program. We administered two exams at the Winter Meeting. We sold 8 VCH study manuals. The VCH Program is a professional accreditation program that offers a way for people in the field to remain up-to-date on industry standards as well as to use as a marketing tool to promote they abide by a code of ethics and earn 10 continuing educations credits each year. That is something to brag about!

If you have been thinking about adding this distinction to your name now is the time to do so. We offer the exam in person and virtually and with the wide array of webinars offered in our industry it is easier than ever to maintain accreditation. The VNLA promotes this program to the public through our marketing efforts on radio, in print, on our website, social media posts, and at the Vermont Flower Show.

Kristina MacKulin on behalf of Annie White, Committe Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

2023 was a successful year from the Treasure's perspective. We were able to budget and fund our programs, events, scholarships, marketing and administrative expenses. Our balance sheet is sound due to the efforts of our members, board, and directors.

The 2023 Vermont Flower Show was a success which has put us in a great position. Through the Flower Show efforts we were also able to support Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity and the Ronald McDonald House through the gala and tote bag sales. The winter and summer meeting were well attended and we were able to cover the expenses with registrations, vendors and sponsorships.

We have and will be able to easily absorb the additional cost related to finding, hiring and training our new executive director. Our 2023 membership dues were slightly higher than our budget. In 2023 we were able to open CDs and earn interest. The Dr. Leonard Perry Scholarship Fund has begun to grow and will allow us to support our future members.

I'm tremendously thankful to our members for all their hard work and willingness to volunteer. I would like to thank the board for the thoughtful planning and budgeting. I would like to thank Kristina for her faithful dedication to carry out the daily goals of the VNLA.

Very truly yours,
Bruce A. Gagne, Committee Chair

BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Cash Accts-Community Bank	46,505	38,433
Cash Accts-VT State Emp Credit U	0	11,554
Certificates of Deposit-Short term	70,528	0
Total Checking/Savings	117,033	49,987
Total Current Assets	117,033	49,987
Fixed Assets		
Equipment	4,144	4,144
Less Accumulated depreciation	-2,216	-1,665
Total Fixed Assets	1,928	2,479
TOTAL ASSET	118,961	52,466
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Credit Cards	1,183	528
Other Current Liabilities	—	—
Total Current Liabilities	1,183	528
Equity		
Retained Earnings	116,741	53,454
Net Income	1,037	-1,516
Total Equity	117,778	51,938
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	118,961	52,466

VNLA 2024 BUDGET

	Income	Expense	Net
Membership Dues	31,000		
Credit card exp.		(450)	
Total Membership Dues	31,000	(450)	30,550
Programs & Events			
Annual Meeting	12,000	(12,000)	
Summer Meeting	9,000	(10,000)	
Workshops & Twilight Mtgs		(500)	
Other Programs-Plastic Pot Recycl.			
Total Program & Events	21,000	(22,500)	(1,500)
VCH Program	2,500	(1,000)	1,500
Education			
Summer Meeting Auction	1,750		
Awards (Assoc & Student)		(1,500)	
Industry Awards Program	500	(2,200)	
Research Grants		(2,000)	
Total Education	2,250	(5,700)	(3,450)
Publications			
Qrtly Dirt (Print & Mail)	5,000	(3,000)	
Total Publications	5,000	(3,000)	2,000
Marketing & Promotion			
Marketing Development		(6,600)	
Print Materials		(2,000)	
VNLA Booth		(1,500)	
VT Blooms Program		(5,000)	
Website		(1,000)	
Total Marketing & Promotion		(16,100)	(16,100)
Dr. Perry Grant	1,500	(0)	1,500
Administration			
Professional Services		(36,800)	
Administrative expenses		(8,630)	
Total Administration		(45,430)	(45,430)
Interest Income	3,000		3,000
Total Income (Loss)	66,250	(94,180)	(27,930)

VOLUNTEER PROJECT OUTREACH COMMITTEE (VPOC)

In the past year, VNLA successfully executed three impactful VPOC projects:

Project 1: CP Smith Elementary School, Burlington (VT Blooms Initiative - July 8th)

The initial VT Blooms event took place at CP Smith Elementary School, where a rain garden was designed and installed, complemented by an outdoor classroom area for students. Led by VNLA member Holly Greenleaf, the project garnered support from Champlain College students, the Lake Champlain Basin Program, and dedicated community volunteers. The successful installation was completed in half a day, thanks to the collaborative efforts of many hands at work.

Project 2: Allen Brook Elementary School, Williston (VT Blooms Initiative - August 25th)

The second VT Blooms Initiative occurred at Allen Brook Elementary School, where a pollinator garden was installed. Initiated by a school volunteer who contacted member Ashley Robinson, the project was brought to life through the collective efforts of community members, parents, and school volunteers. Completed in half a day, the pollinator garden enhanced the plantings around the school's entrance just in time for the start of the school year.

Project 3: Habitat For Humanity of Addison County (HHAC), Vergennes (October 14th)

Our final project involved a collaborative effort with Habitat For Humanity of Addison County, marking our second project with the organization. Since 2018 we have completed three additional projects with the Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity. This endeavor included planning, design, and landscaping installation for residents of a net-zero home located on Booth Woods in Vergennes. Soliciting help from HHAC volunteers, along with the involvement of numerous VNLA members and generous donors, the project was successfully completed in one day. The initiative was promoted within the membership and marketed to the public via press release and Addison Independent Newspaper.

The success of these projects underscores VNLA's commitment to making a positive impact on communities large and small across the state. As we reflect on these achievements, we invite all members to join us in the rewarding projects that lie ahead. Together, we can make a difference and continue building a stronger, more connected community.

Ashley Robinson, Committee Chair





Nursery and
Landscape Association

ANNUAL REPORT 2023